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## Nineteenth-Century Britain and Musical Representations of Asia

Bennett Zon

It is impossible to generalize about nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century British representations of Asia. Nineteenth-century Asia was immense, including vast land masses of Asian Russia (Siberia, Russian Central Asia, Caucasia and Armenia); Turkish Asia (Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine and Mesopotamia); Arabia; Irania (Persia, Afghanistan and Baluchistan); India; Indo-China (Burma, Siam, the Malay Peninsula and French Cochin China); the Malay Archipelago; China; Korea; Tibet; and Japan. *Longman's Geographical Series* (1896) describes Asia as “the eastern and larger portion of the great land mass known as Eurasia. It is about five times as large, and more than twice as populous as Europe, its area being over 17 million sq. Miles, and its population about 840 million . . . [it is] On the north . . . bounded by the Arctic Ocean. On the east by the Pacific Ocean. On the South by the Indian Ocean . . . [and] On the west by the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, the Caucasus Mountains, the Caspian Sea, the Ural River, and the Ural Mountains.”<sup>1</sup> Within Asia British imperial holdings were of course concentrated in certain regions of Southern and South-Eastern regions, and so inevitably more cultural knowledge – if not understanding – of those areas accrued with increased contact. David Cannadine points out that India, for example, attracted British understanding precisely because of similarities in its inherently hierarchical and ceremonial social, religious and political structures. Accordingly, far from seeing themselves in egalitarian terms, Britons considered Britain an “unequal society characterized by a seamless web of layered gradations,”<sup>2</sup> and it was this impression they replicated in their estimation of foreign cultures, such as India. Such affinity was extended to countries outside the empire for which analogous structures could be discerned, but those more seemingly primitive worlds – those well beyond the territorial boundaries of the empire – attracted for much of the nineteenth century British incomprehension in almost every artefact of its own intellectual culture. Musical culture is, in this regard, no exception. By and large the music of “comprehensible” countries within the geographical and psychological range of the British empire was more sympathetically received than the music of other foreign peoples, be they historical or so-called primitive moderns. Thus in respect of Asian cultures comprehension mainly predominates in British representations of music.

Beyond Asian musical cultures, however, British incomprehension subsisted in elaborately teleological anthropologies embodied by developmental concepts like monogenism, polygenism and the Great Chain of Being. While inherently innocuous as methods of interpreting human development, monogenism (belief in human descent from Adam and Eve) and polygenism (belief

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<sup>1</sup> Longmans' Geographical Series, *The World for Junior Students* (London, New York, Bombay and Calcutta: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1896/1912, Book II), pp. 291, 274.

<sup>2</sup> David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 4.

in diverse human origins) were arguably more significant for identifying developmental stasis. Thus, monogenists were forced to account for peoples seemingly omitted from Biblical descent, such as non-Christians, heathens, savages and other so-called primitives. Polygenists struggled as well because they believed that human differentiation was a result of civilization,<sup>3</sup> and therefore undeveloped peoples were by definition primitive or savage. In anthropological terminology, “degeneration” helped explain the presence of just such unfortunate people. The historian of anthropology, George Stocking, writes that “degeneration, conceived in physical and cultural terms, provided an alternative explanation for the manifest human diversity that increasingly forced itself on anthropological thoughts, just as aggressive ethnocentrism and Christian humanitarianism coexisted in the general cultural attitude toward non-Western peoples.”<sup>4</sup> On the surface, the Great Chain of Being (man is the apex of nature) would seem less controversial, but it, too, was fuelled by scientific racism, as cultural and physical disparity became important signifiers of difference in Britain and Europe.<sup>5</sup> Like its counterparts in monogenism and polygenism, the Great Chain served more than just anthropological purposes, in this case linking man and apes and apes and blacks.<sup>6</sup>

For anthropologists these developmental models situated foreign peoples within a sliding social scale, from savagery and barbarism to civilization. In his three-stage approach Adam Ferguson, for example, “looked for pattern, law, or direction operating behind the particular events of history.”<sup>7</sup> Yet that same model, seen by some as a precursor to evolutionism,<sup>8</sup> frequently deprived peoples of their inalienable humanity. Graham Richards calls this “the subhumanity question”<sup>9</sup> rationalizing those not amongst the cultural elect. In ethnomusicology throughout the nineteenth century this is an observable characteristic, culminating in *A History of Music* (1885) by John Fredrick Rowbotham. William Stafford provides an early example, devoting almost a third of *A History of Music* (1835) to non-Western music. Stafford’s developmentalism is obvious from the title of his first chapter, “The Origin of Music Traced to Natural Causes – The Music of Savage Nations.” As such the people perceived as most primitive preserve in their culture the world’s earliest forms of music. The “Esquimaux,” whose music is said to have been unchanged “up to the present day,”<sup>10</sup> were “as nearly in a state of barbarism as possible, though fond of music, had no instruments except a species of drum and tambarine [*sic*]. They had songs,

<sup>3</sup> Hanna Franziska Augstein, *Race: The Origins of an Idea, 1760-1850* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996), xxiv.

<sup>4</sup> George Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1987), p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; and Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Gustav Jahoda, *Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> John J. Honigsmann, *The Development of Anthropological Ideas* (Homewood, IL et al.: The Dorsey Press, 1976), p. 86.

<sup>8</sup> See Peter J. Bowler, *Evolution: The History of an Idea* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), pp. 48-95.

<sup>9</sup> Graham Richards, ‘Race’, *Racism and Psychology: Towards a Reflexive History* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> William C. Stafford, *A History of Music* (Edinburgh: Constable and Co; and London: Hurst, Chance, and Co., 1830), p. 6.

but there was neither variety, compass, nor melody, in their vocal effusions.”<sup>11</sup> Towards the end of the century developmentalism continued to grip ethnomusicological thinking. Rowbotham, like Stafford, includes extensive material on primitive and non-Western music, devoting a whole volume (of three) to primitive music. Yet unlike Stafford, Rowbotham views modern primitive music as prehistoric, and struggles to place it within the teleological continuum of Western culture. For him music so-called is a function of civilization, itself the intersection of earlier, more primitive emotional stages of man with its more evolved, intellectual counterpart:

Music is a Dualism. It is formed of the conjunction of two elements – the purely musical, the other poetical – the one sensuous, the other spiritual or intellectual – the one owing its origin and development to Instruments, and based on the mere animal delight in Sound; the other owing its origin and development to Language, and based on the fusion of the Emotional and Intellectual sides of man’s nature. The object which the historian of Music must set before him is to trace the goings on of these two elements, at first far apart and moving in separate orbits – to show how their paths gradually approached each other – how a mutual attraction was set up, till at last they were necessarily drawn into the same plane of revolution. Here is the geniture of a New Music.<sup>12</sup>

For Rowbotham primitive, prehistoric music also follows a typically fixed three-stage development, what he calls the Drum, Pipe and Lyre Stages. They are “to the Musician what the Theological, Metaphysical, and Positive Stages are to the Comtist, or the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages to the archaeologist.”<sup>13</sup> Expectedly, these stages correspond to various nations and peoples, as shown below in Figure 1.<sup>14</sup>

One cannot help but notice within this figure the seemingly tentative placement of “Nations of History” at the threshold of civilization, and arguably this is where British estimation of Asian musical culture begins to be focussed – on what Rowbotham calls “elder civilizations” such as found in Asian countries, for example. Indeed, Rowbotham is a good barometer of British attitudes towards Asia, because of the position he designates for it in his Comtean tripartition of musical history. Interestingly, Egyptians, Assyrians and Hebrews are Lyre races, whereas “Chinese, Indo-Chinese and Other Mongoloids” are races of the Pipe stage. The Hindus, however, though following these latter, find a position amongst the Lyre races. Why Rowbotham elevates the music of the Hindus at the same time diminishing Chinese musical culture is not something which has an easy answer. Clearly he saw Hindu music as “the beginning of a consecutive narrative that will reach to our own times.”<sup>15</sup> But the Chinese were absorbed by the sensuousness of music to the detriment of its own intellectual development. They stalled at a

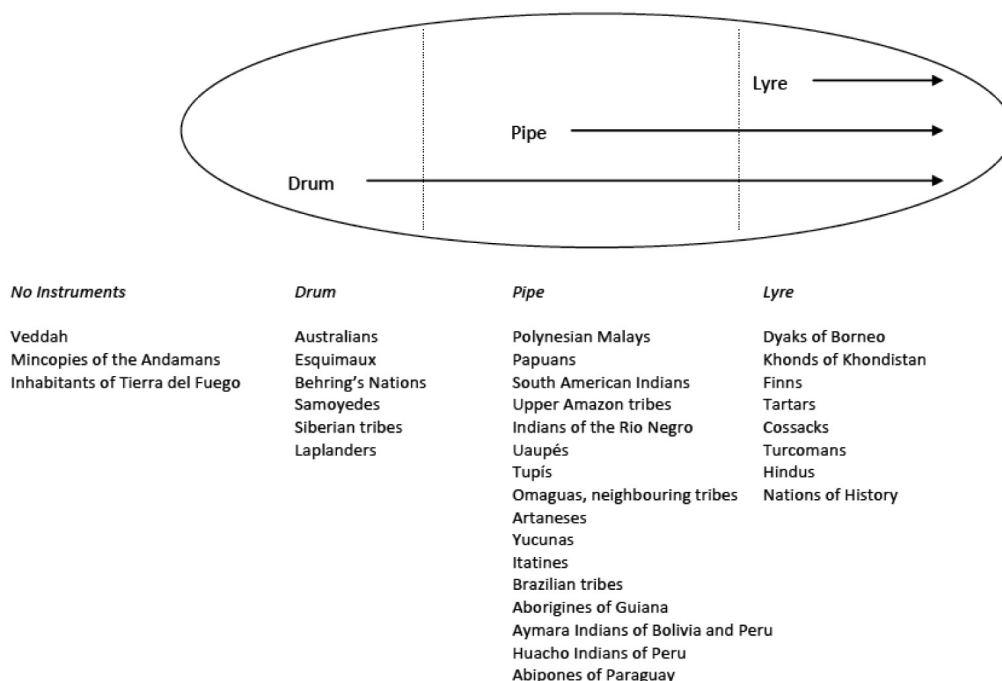
<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 3–4.

<sup>12</sup> John Frederick Rowbotham, *A History of Music* (London: Trübner, 1885, 3 vols.), i [xi].

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1, xii, xx.

<sup>14</sup> Bennett Zon, “From “incomprehensibility” to “meaning”: Transcription and representation of non-Western music in nineteenth-century British musicology and ethnomusicology,” in Rachel Cowgill and Julian Rushton, eds., *Europe, Empire and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century British Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 199.

<sup>15</sup> Rowbotham, *A History of Music*, Vol. 2, p. 1.



**Figure 1.** John Frederick Rowbotham, *A History of Music* (1885), volume1: Drum,Pipe and Lyre Stages.

crucial stage: “To the Chinese mere sensuous delight in the tone presents such attractions, that their musical system is occupied mainly with the analysis and classification of the different qualities of Sound, and only secondarily with those sequences of Sounds which we call Notes.”<sup>16</sup>

The cautionary tale that is Chinese (and by extension Asian) musical history is interesting for its pattern of developmental incompleteness, found across a spectrum of nineteenth-century British writing on Asian musics. The composer and writer William Crotch observes such strong commonalities between scales of the Celtic fringe (Scottish, Irish), East Indian and North American indigenous peoples and the Chinese, and those of the Javanese, that he presumes common ancestry and therefore greater antiquity.<sup>17</sup> While common descent denotes antiquity, however, it comes at the price of cultural individuation, so the Chinese, for example, remain in developmental Limbo, having progressed beyond the Drum yet unable to attain the Lyre. Interestingly, this same attitude is also found in a more particularized historiographical genre – the history of church music. Here, Christian musicologists can be observed tussling with the problematical question of music’s Semitic (i.e., Jewish) origins in the Temple. Fuelled by soft (and sometimes hard) anti-semitism some historians refuse Jewish origins altogether; others are more measured, and amongst them there are many who define the very essence of Jewish music as

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 285.

<sup>17</sup> William Crotch, letter to Crawford, cited in John Crawford, *History of the Indian Archipelago containing an Account of the Manners, Arts, Languages, Religions, Institutions, and Commerce of its Inhabitants* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., 1820), Vol. 1, pp. 339-40.

neither “original” nor developed.<sup>18</sup> In Victorian religious contexts this “incompleteness” has theological implications, for Jews are considered to be religiously “unsaved.” Because of their uncontested Biblical descent, however, typical anthropological models are problematized. Under normal circumstances, degenerationism might be applied to such a case, but Christian descent from Jewish origins precludes a monogenistic view. In religious terms, the Jews remain stuck in the Pipe stage, and according to Rowbotham so do the Chinese.

While many music historians portray the music of Asian nations as only partially developed, others prefer to ringfence Asian music under the banner of Oriental. William Stafford does this under the heading of Oriental Music, following William Jones’s division of Asia into Indians, Arabians, Persians, Chinese and Tartars. Yet even allowing for independent development in relation to Western music (a polygenistic view in which music developed from different sources rather than a single one) many historians remained fixed in an antagonistic attitude towards much Asian music they clearly fail to understand. The great Victorian music critic Henry Chorley reduces national music to the four points of the compass, equating each direction to a set of human sentiments, beginning with the East, and by way of the South and North, ending with the West.<sup>19</sup> The music of the East represents the cradle of civilization; the South, full-bodied emotion (Italy) and heightened intellect (France); the North, fantasy; and the West, English civilization. In parallel, he divides Britain into the four points of the compass, also allying geographical location and human sentiment. The music of the East is Wales; the South, Ireland; the North, Scotland; and the West (again) England. Thus, the Welsh (East) are solitary, proud of their ancestry, defensive and linguistically different; the Irish (South) represent “A wild world . . . full of every gracious natural produce”; the Scottish (North) are more “defined”; and the English (West) more “universal.”

Like most nineteenth-century authors, Chorley’s principal axis is East-West, beginning with the East, and by way of the South and North, ending with the West. Intriguingly, however, Chorley divides the East into an earlier Hebrew-East and later Christian-East. The music of the earlier Hebrew-East is more primitive and “natural” than the “human” and therefore “national” music of the later Christian-East. But what music actually comprises the earlier East, other than the Hebrew music which is its apex? According to Chorley it also includes the music of Hindus, Indians, Chinese and Turkish: i.e., what he calls “Oriental” (Asian) music. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given its relation to Hebrew music, all Oriental music is disdained: “The almost universal monotony and coarseness of the singing voices, if so they may be called, or the orientals, seems accompanied by inability on their part to appreciate beauty of vocal tone in others.”<sup>20</sup> Chinese music is even more harshly criticised: “What we know of Chinese melody and music, with very small exception, in every respect more rude and more shapeless than that of far more

<sup>18</sup> See Bennett Zon, ‘Victorian Anti-Semitism and the Origin of Gregorian Chant’, in Paul Collins, ed., *Renewal and Resistance: Catholic Church Music from the 1850s to Vatican II* (Oxford et al: Peter Lang, 2010), pp. 99-119.

<sup>19</sup> See Bennett Zon, *Representing Non-Western Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Rochester NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), pp. 119-128.

<sup>20</sup> Henry Chorley, *The National Music of the World* (London: William Reeves, 1880/1911, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), p. 38.

savage people”;<sup>21</sup> “The Ancient [Chinese] Hymn in honour of the Ancestors” is “a tune in the midst of chaotic handfuls of notes.”<sup>22</sup>

Oriental music was not universally deprecated, however. Writing of Burmese music Colonel Symes tells us that “Music is a science . . . which is held in considerable estimation throughout the Birman empire.”<sup>23</sup> The most obvious exception, however, is India. The first to reject this kind of Orientalist thinking was William Jones, renowned scholar of Indian languages, literature and philosophy, Supreme Court judge in Bengal from 1783 and founder of The Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784. Jones treats all music, be it Hindu or Western music, in its own terms: “the *Hindoo* poets never fail to change the *metre*, which is their *mode*, according to the change of subject or sentiment in the same piece; and I could produce instances of *poetical modulation* (if such a phrase may be used) at least equal to the most affecting modulations of our greatest composers.”<sup>24</sup> By judging Eastern and Western music equally Jones also initiated the first sustained assault on the presumptions of developmentalism, which by the late eighteenth century were firmly established within the British anthropological mindset. Indeed, Stafford lets Jones’s contemporary, William Ouseley, speak on his behalf in praising Indian music for its accessibility and fine aesthetic properties: “It is of the *diatonic* genera; and “many of the Hindoo melodies possess the plaintive simplicity of the Scotch and Irish; and others a wild originality, pleasing beyond description.”<sup>25</sup> Equanimity and advancing objectivity can also be found in the strikingly modern writings of William Daune, who for example claims that “The furtherance of such inquiries . . . may lead to a direct improvement in the cultivation of music, while there can be no doubt that the resources of that art would be immensely enriched by a more complete knowledge of the different styles of melody which prevail in foreign countries.”<sup>26</sup>

While a developmental mindset continued (despite the importance of Jones) well into the 1840s and beyond, increased familiarity through commerce and travel clearly eroded prejudice towards Asian countries immediately beyond those of the British Empire. From the time of Jones, however, India remained largely exempt from the Orientalist criticism that continued to affect other Asian countries. Why might this be? What is that makes Indian music so different? Although applied to Burmese music, the answer may lie in some of the words of Colonel Symes above: “Music is a science.” According to Willard “A Treatise on the Music of Hindoostan is a desideratum which has not yet been supplied . . . [although] several eminent Orientalists have endeavoured to penetrate this elegant branch of Indian science.”<sup>27</sup> Perhaps Willard expresses in

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 32-33.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> Colonel Symes, ‘Burmese Musical Instruments’, *Harmonicon* 4/1 (1826), p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> William Jones, “On the Musical Modes of the Hindoos: Written in 1784, and Since Much Enlarged [1792], By the President [of the Asiatic Society of Bengal],” in Sourindro Mohun Tagore, *Hindu Music* (Delhi Low Price Publications, 1882/1994), p. 157.

<sup>25</sup> Stafford, *A History of Music*, p.29.

<sup>26</sup> William Daune, “Observations with a View to an Inquiry into the Music of the East,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, old series 6 (1841), p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> N. Augustus Willard, *A Treatise on the Music of Hindoostan: Comprising a Detail of the Ancient Theory and Modern Practice* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1834), in Tagore, *Hindu Music*, p. 1.

microcosm what Cannadine does for empire, and through his treatise communicates similarities appealingly discernible between British culture and Hindu music. Willard is quite adamant about this relationship, in fact. For him Hindu music is entirely like European music, and it is its science, in the broadest of terms, which helps prove it: “How far the ancient philosophers of this country advanced towards the perfection of this science will appear in the course of this work; but as they were something similar to the awkward attempts made in Europe previous to the invention of the system now in use, they were insufficient for practice.”<sup>28</sup> Willard appeals at the level of system, and as system it reflects the very essence of Cannadine’s argument: “the British Empire was about the familiar and the domestic, as well as the different and the exotic: indeed, it was in large part about the domestication of the exotic – the comprehending and the reordering of the foreign in parallel, analogous, equivalent, resemblant terms.”<sup>29</sup> For Willard, it is the universality of science which makes Indian music accessible, while its art is scientifically contingent. While the idea of music is both art and science, “The science is essential to the complete efficiency of the arts,”<sup>30</sup> as Daniel Reeves says. In other words from a British imperial perspective science, it could be argued, is its form, and art its content. On this basis, music may not be a universal language, but its mode of construction is. Science universalizes and art particularizes, and Indian music proves this uniquely amongst Asian nations. The content of that science must also resonate with British contemporary values. Would it be too far-fetched to suggest, therefore, that within the system of rags, for example, there is also implicitly what Cannadine refers to as ornamentation? Did the British recognize within that musical system what Cannadine calls an analogue of hierarchy?<sup>31</sup>

As this suggests, if British values are read into Hindu music they must be partly scientific, and science, by the middle of the nineteenth century, had become the site of heavily contested ideological debate. In music, science engendered “true taste,”<sup>32</sup> but for John Cook it was only recently “embodied in scientific form.”<sup>33</sup> Independently, science, as it was previously known, was changing and no more perhaps than in the area of anthropological science. By the 1860s, developmentalism was being challenged head-on by Darwinian evolutionism. The effects of this debate can be felt throughout ethnomusicology of the period. This is typified in the works of Carl Engel. Engel is mostly widely known today for some key works in the history of British ethnomusicology, including his *Descriptive Catalogue of the Musical Instruments in the South Kensington Museum* (1874), *The Music of the Most Ancient Nations* (1864), *An Introduction to the Study of National Music* (1866) and the later compilation of *Musical Times* articles, *The Literature of National Music* (1879). Engel also played an important part in establishing ethnomusicology at the heart of British anthropology, in his contribution on music to the first *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (1874), the first systematized approach to field methodology to be produced in

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> Cannadine, *Ornamentation*, xix.

<sup>30</sup> Daniel M. G. S. Reeves, *A Treatise on the Science of Music* (London and New York: J. Alfred Novello, 1853), iii.

<sup>31</sup> Cannadine, *Ornamentation*, p. 41.

<sup>32</sup> Reeves, *A Treatise on the Science of Music*, iii.

<sup>33</sup> John Cook, *Sound and the Physical Basis of Music* (London and Edinburgh: W & R Chambers, 1877), p. 7.



Britain. Following in a direct line from William Jones and Augustus Willard, Engel registers a proclamation of universal musical equality:

Although the feelings of the human heart, which music expresses, are, in the main, the same in every nation; yet they are, in individual instances, considerably modified by different influences . . . the tunes are in some cases so totally different from those of our own country, that they are, on first acquaintance, almost as incomprehensible as poems in a language but slightly known to us. Indeed, the common adage that music is a universal language, is but half true. There are, at all events, many dialects in this language which require to be studied before they can be understood.<sup>34</sup>

Inevitably, Asian music reflects this universalism, especially in the similarities of its pentatonic elements, including Indian, Chinese, Siamese, Javanese, amongst others. For Engel, “the student of national music might not inappropriately be likened to the botanist, to whom all plants are of interest.”<sup>35</sup> As with all universalists, however, Engel struggles to particularize, and Asian music is particularly difficult in that regard. The aim of the horticulturalist “is not only to bring the indigenous flowers to the highest state of perfection, but also to cultivate new specimens imported from all parts of the world . . . unfortunately he is generally deficient in botanical knowledge.”<sup>36</sup>

With the advent and wide-ranging acceptance of universalism, and what would eventually become classic evolutionism, developmentalism began to look increasingly untenable as an anthropological model. Yet developmentalism had a second wind in the form of philosopher and social evolutionist, Herbert Spencer. Beginning with *The Origin and Function of Music* (1857), and continuing well into the early twentieth century, Spencer translated German morphology into an anthropological and musicological paradigm. From scientist Ernst von Baer he took the idea that man evolves from the general to the specialized (from homogeneity to heterogeneity), and from later scientist Ernst Haeckel, the inherent, superior perfectability of man.<sup>37</sup> Reflecting these theories, music evolves from speech in the same way that civilization evolves from savagery: “That music is a product of civilization is manifest: for though some of the lowest savages have their dance-chants, these are of a kind scarcely to be signified by the title musical: at most they supply but the vaguest rudiment of music properly so called.”<sup>38</sup> Needless to say, Spencer was as bad for Asian music as he was for any other non-Western music. “That recitative,” he says, “- beyond which, by the way, the Chinese and Hindoos seem never to have advanced, grew naturally out of the modulations and cadences of strong feeling.”<sup>39</sup> Here Spencer not only reinvigorates the developmental model (the Chinese and Hindoos seem never to have advanced),

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<sup>34</sup> Carl Engel, *The Music of the Most Ancient Nations, particularly of the Assyrians, Egyptians, and Hebrews; with Special Reference to Recent Discoveries in Western Asia and in Egypt* (London: John Murray, 1864), pp. 167–8.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Bowler, *Evolution: The History of an Idea*, p. 221.

<sup>38</sup> Herbert Spencer, “The Origin and Function of Music,” *Fraser’s Magazine* (Oct. 1857), in Herbert Spencer, *Literary Style and Music* (London: Watts and Co., 1857/1950), p. 68.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

but also enshrines the kind of dualism which would coalesce in Rowbotham (the music of the Chinese and Hindoos grows out of feeling, rather than intellect). Later still Spencer continues his assault along the same lines, referring to a Japanese song called Sayanara: “No listener to this can I think deny that it is simply an idealization of the vocal utterances which strong feeling of a relevant kind might naturally produce.”<sup>40</sup>

Darwin would soon change all that. For him there was no teleology, or ineluctable development towards perfection. Species did not develop from simplicity to complexity, but simply changed, randomly according to the overarching needs of survival. There is only a struggle for survival, no predetermined and universal laws of human progress, or development from savage and barbarian to civilization. In musical terms this would eventually effect a seismic change in the way non-Western peoples were represented in the West, and Asian cultures would be amongst the greatest beneficiaries. The man who, more than anyone, embodies this change is Charles Samuel Myers. Myers, the founding father of British ethnomusicology, began his career studying medicine at Cambridge. Not long after he graduated he was invited to participate in the seminal anthropological expedition to the Australasian archipelago of Torres Straits (New Guinea) and Sarawak (Borneo). Known as the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits the expedition was conceived “as a multidisciplinary project encompassing anthropology in its broadest sense, including ethnology, physical anthropology, psychology, linguistics, sociology, ethnomusicology and anthropogeography.”<sup>41</sup> The expedition spent roughly seven months in Torres Straits (between Northern Australia and Papua New Guinea) from April to October 1898 and though generally concentrating its fieldwork on Mer, allowed for considerable movement to other islands in the Straits. Myers was responsible for music, and his research became part of a set of six volumes published from 1901 to 1935, including research on hearing in *Physiology and Psychology* (Volume 2, 1901 and 1903), and on music and musical instruments in *Arts and Crafts* (Volume 4, 1912). While concentrating on the music of Australasia, Myers’s work on the expedition had serious ramifications for ethnomusicology more broadly.

Myers’s significance is due to the fact that he effectively overturned Spencer’s developmental programme. While clinging to some of its less significant remnants he nevertheless proved experimentally that all men, irrespective of their anthropological state of development (savage or civilized), have roughly the same sensory perceptions. Savages were no longer more sensorily developed than their civilized counterparts. Because progression from savagery to civilization bore no perceivable signs of physical or mental difference they were not more developed, but “culturally adapted.” Myers’s interpretation of cultural adaptationism is rooted in a combination of gestalt and the psychology of individual differences, or differential psychology.<sup>42</sup> This explains how and why people are psychologically different from one another, and it forms the

<sup>40</sup> Herbert Spencer, “The Origin of Music,” *Facts and Comments* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1902/7), p. 43.

<sup>41</sup> Herle, Anita and Sandra Rouse, eds., *Cambridge and the Torres Strait: Centenary Essays on the 1898 Anthropological Expedition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1-2.

<sup>42</sup> Colin Cooper, *Individual Differences* (London: Arnold, and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, 2nd ed.), ix.

basis of Myers's ethnomusicological attitude. For him life consists of both the "lives of its several parts [neurologically] and of the 'life' of the unitary 'individual,' which is more than the sum of the life of its several parts."<sup>43</sup> By analogy music is also greater than the sum of its parts, because, like life, it accumulates individual meaning as it develops. Myers sets this out in his article *The Beginnings of Music* (1913) in which all music is subject to the same universal, yet individual, evolutionary progression beginning with noise but ending in meaning:

1. discrimination between noises and tones
2. awareness of differences in loudness, pitch, duration, character and quality
3. awareness of absolute pitch
4. appreciation and use of (small) approximately equal tone-distances
5. appreciation and use of (larger) consonant intervals and the development of small intervals in relation thereto
6. melodic phrasing
7. rhythmic phrasing
8. musical meaning.<sup>44</sup>

With all cultures, be they Asian, Australasian or European, acquiring meaning through their own individual development, conventional developmental paradigms lost credibility because they did not lead people to more perfect stages of existence. The music of Mer followed the same pattern as European music. The content was different but the form was the same.

Although Myers contributed to the demise of developmentalism, he did not overturn it, nor as a result did he necessarily strengthen the position of Darwinian evolution. Though hotly debated, Darwinian evolution remained entirely unproven and theoretical, and generally speaking failed to supplant Spencer until well into the twentieth century. Conservative Victorian musicology proves this again and again, as the writings of unreconstructed Spencerian C. Hubert H. Parry suggest:

The basis of all music and the very first steps in the long story of musical development are to be found in the musical utterances of the most undeveloped and unconscious types of humanity, such as unadulterated savages and inhabitants of lonely isolated districts well removed from any of the influences of education and culture. Such savages are in the same position in relation to music as the remote ancestors of the race before the story of the artistic development of music began; and through study of the ways in which they contrive their primitive fragments of tune and rhythm, and of the way they string these together, the first steps of musical development may be traced.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Charles Samuel Myers, "The Absurdity of any Mind-- Body Relation" (1932), in Charles S. Myers, *In the Realm of Mind: Nine Chapters on the Application and Implications of Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937), p. 202.

<sup>44</sup> Charles Samuel Myers, "The Beginnings of Music" (1913), in Charles S. Myers, *A Psychologist's Point of View: Twelve Semi-Popular Addresses on Various Subjects* (London: William Heinemann (Medical Books) Ltd, 1933), p. 196.

<sup>45</sup> C. Hubert H. Parry, *The Art of Music* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co. Ltd., 1893), [52].

Nevertheless, while Parry's developmentalism continued to inform musical readers well into the next century, it also signaled the beginning of the end for the anthropological model. Like all anthropologies, developmentalism reflected the values of the age in which it was current, and when those values changed so too did their intellectual universe. Myers's work certainly proves this, but there were other reasons as well, and those had far-reaching implications for the representation of Asian and other music.

Whether Myers's work was a cause or effect, there was no denying that as the twentieth-century dawned British imperial fortunes were changing politically, intellectually and culturally, and with that change came fundamentally different attitudes towards anthropological otherness. As Cannadine explains "the British Empire was not only a geopolitical entity: it was also a culturally created and imaginatively constructed artefact."<sup>46</sup> This is also true of ethnomusicology, especially in the way that emerging discipline began to draw upon the increasingly universal science of evolutionary, rather than developmental, paradigms. Whether Myers's findings in Australasia were a cause or effect is therefore difficult to gauge, but what is clear is that his work ushered in a new period in the way that foreign, non-Western cultures were represented. With evolutionary universalism, Britons no longer regarded certain Asian peoples as "incomplete," incomprehensible, or semi-developed. Asian musical culture had come of age, at least from a European standpoint, and with it a long history of developmentalism would give way to an evolutionary science more fit for purpose in an age of increasing uncertainty and unsure futures.

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<sup>46</sup> Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, p. 3.